



Department of Commerce

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PLANNER'S UPDATE

A monthly newsletter to share helpful information related to planning in Washington State

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Welcome to the Planner's Update, an electronic newsletter from The Department of Commerce, Growth Management Services. We send this newsletter monthly to share helpful information related to planning in Washington State.

Please feel free to send us any comments or ideas for how to make this newsletter more useful. You can also use the link below to provide additional names of planners who might like to subscribe. Please also consider sharing this newsletter with planning commissioners.

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1. STATE SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET REDUCTIONS AFFECT GROWTH MANAGEMENT SERVICES

As the state's revenues have continued to trail behind projections in the 2009-2011 biennial budget, Governor Gregoire has proposed additional spending reductions for the 2010 supplemental budget. This will bring more changes to Growth Management Services (GMS) programs.

When the 2009-2011 state budget was adopted last spring, Growth Management Services' capacity for technical assistance was reduced by about 60 percent from the previous biennium, including a 40 percent staff reduction. The proposed 2010 supplemental budget reduces growth management grants to local governments by \$3.76

million, and will effectively reduce GMS staff by an additional 17 percent. Here's how these reductions will affect GMS services to local governments:

- Funding for GMA grants for Periodic Updates due in 2011 is eliminated. Commerce will not be issuing those grants unless funding is restored during the 2010 legislative session.
- Out of consideration of these grant reductions, Commerce has introduced legislation that would extend GMA Periodic Update deadlines an additional 3 years. If this bill passes, cities and counties with a deadline of December 1, 2011, would see it changed to December 1, 2014. The same 3-year deadline extension would be provided for jurisdictions with deadlines in 2012, 2013 and 2014.
- Funding is also eliminated for the jurisdictions that have a 2010 GMA Periodic Update deadline (due to a previous 3-year extension from their original 2007 deadline). Commerce's request legislation would further extend the GMA Periodic Update deadlines for those jurisdictions an additional three years.
- Funding is eliminated for Buildable Lands grants in the 2009-2011 biennium.
- Growth Management Services' technical assistance program will be reduced by "loaning" 2.5 employees to the Department of Ecology to assist cities and counties with shoreline master program updates. The remaining staff at Growth Management Services will focus on assisting smaller cities and counties that have little or no planning staff. We are also exploring ways to continue to support the popular Short Course on Local Planning with a lesser time commitment from GMS staff. We do look forward to continuing the same level of support for the regional planner forums.

While these are significant changes to our capacity, Growth Management Services remains committed to providing local governments with high-quality planning assistance and educational programs. We ask for your patience as we make these adjustments. If you have any questions, contact Leonard Bauer, Managing Director, at 360.725.3055 or leonard.bauer@commerce.wa.gov.

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2. URBAN GROWTH AREA DATA TO BE AVAILABLE THROUGH 2010 CENSUS

The US Census Bureau has agreed to include Washington State Urban Growth Area Boundaries in 2010 census geography as part of an experimental program. The Washington State Department of Commerce and other state agencies have been working with census bureau staff to produce preliminary boundaries. The preliminary boundaries are available for local review at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/geographic/uga.asp>. Comments must be received by January 31, 2010. Please contact Sam Wentz at 725.3063 or sam.wentz@commerce.wa.gov for more information.

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3. WSDOT OFFERS GRANTS FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROJECTS

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) today released a "call for projects" for their Safe Routes to School program. The goals of the Safe Routes to School grants are to increase the number of children walking and biking to school where it is safe, and if it's not safe, work to make it safer. The program supports pedestrian and bicycle safety projects such as walking to school buses, sidewalks, bike lanes, pedestrian safety education, bicycle safety skills classes, crossing guards, speed feedback signs and traffic safety cameras. The program itself was created to provide children a safe, healthy alternative to riding the bus or being driven to school.

Eligible Safe Routes projects are those within two-miles of primary and middle schools (grades K-8), and that address engineering solutions, educational and encouragement programs, and law enforcement efforts. Review criteria for the applications are also based on project readiness and need or potential impact.

More detailed information about the grant program and the application process is available on WSDOT's Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/SafeRoutes/CallForProjects. Applications for Safe Routes to School project grants are due to WSDOT on May 3, 2010.

To learn more about the program, a Safe Routes to School Overview Webinar has been scheduled for February 1st from 1:00 to 3:00. To register go to <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/218536304>. For more information, or if you do not have the capacity to participate on a webinar, please contact Charlotte Claybrooke at 360.705.7302.

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4. WDFW RELEASES GUIDANCE ON LANDSCAPE PLANNING FOR WASHINGTON'S WILDLIFE

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) just released the final version of a new guidance document, "*Landscape Planning for Washington's Wildlife: Managing for Biodiversity in Developing Areas*." This document is a new addition to the series of Priority Habitats and Species management recommendations, which are science-based documents provided to help inform local land use planning and conservation decisions across the state.

Landscape Planning provides science-based information about how terrestrial wildlife responds to residential development at a variety of densities, real-world examples of how habitat and biodiversity assessments can be performed at the county, watershed, and site scale, and recommendations for those interested in incorporating wildlife needs and biodiversity conservation into local planning.

The document is posted online at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/phsrecs.htm>, with another link from the main Habitat page at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/habitat/>.

Users may download the document from the Web sites listed above. There is a.pdf of the main document, as well as three appendices in Excel format, including an interactive spreadsheet with information on species and their sensitivity to development. There will be no hard copy or CD versions produced by WDFW.

We hope you find this document useful to your work. Please feel free to direct questions about the document to planningforwildlife@dfw.wa.gov.

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5. DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR 2010 NEW PARTNERS CONFERENCE

The Local Government Commission (LGC) will be hosting the **9th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities Conference** in Seattle on February 4-6, 2010.

The 2010 conference program will underscore the connections between smart growth, equitable development and environmental justice. Many sessions on the conference program are devoted to important social equity and environmental justice issues. Additionally, a daylong pre-conference workshop on "Working Together for Equitable Development: Voices and Lessons from Environmental Justice and Smart Growth" is scheduled for February 3, 2010.

A conference plenary on "Smart Growth at the Intersection of Environmental Justice and Green Jobs" will also articulate how smart growth can foster green jobs, social equity and affordable housing as our nation moves towards a more sustainable, green economy, and will feature two dynamic speakers: PolicyLink CEO Angela Glover-Blackwell, a renowned community building activist and advocate; and Majora Carter, a renowned environmental justice and green jobs advocate.

A Diversity Scholarship Fund has been established for this event, making scholarships and travel stipends available to leaders from lower-income and minority communities, as well as representatives from organizations whose work is primarily focused on social equity and environmental justice. For more details or to apply for a diversity scholarship, please contact Shani Alford at salford@lgc.org or 916.448.1198 x330.

For more information about the New Partners for Smart Growth Conference or to register, please visit: www.newpartners.org.

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